

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:43 a.m. from the Map Room at the White House to the convention meeting in San Antonio, TX. In his remarks, he referred to Frank S. Page, president, Southern Baptist Convention; and Richard Land, president, Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

Remarks Announcing the Appointment of Edward W. Gillespie as White House Counselor to the President

June 13, 2007

When Dan told me that he was going to leave the White House so he could spend more time with his three young children and his wife, I never thought I'd be able to find somebody that could possibly do as good a job as he has done. I'm fortunate that Ed Gillespie has agreed to join the administration. He is a seasoned hand who has got excellent judgment. He's a good strategic thinker that I know will do a fine job.

We're going to miss Dan. He's been a friend of mine for—gosh, since 1993, but I fully understand why a young dad needs to be with his family. And I admire the fact that he has set such an important priority. And I also—thank you for your service.

And I also thank Ed for agreeing to come over here to the White House. We've got a lot to do. We've got to continue laying the foundation for peace. We've got an immigration bill that will help enforce our borders. We've got an energy bill that we need to get out that will make us less dependent on foreign oil. And we've got to remind the Congress that they need to be fiscally wise with the people's money; that we can balance this budget of ours without raising taxes.

And so, Ed, I'm looking forward to working with you. I thank you for your service. And, Bartlett, good luck to you, brother. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq

June 13, 2007

I condemn in the strongest terms today's terrorist attack on the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra. This barbarous act was clearly aimed at inflaming sectarian tensions among the peoples of Iraq and defeating their aspirations for a secure, democratic, and prosperous country. I join Iraq's leaders in calling on all Iraqis to refrain from acts of vengeance and reject Al Qaida's scheme to sow hatred among the Iraqi people and to instead join together in fighting Al Qaida as the true enemy of a free and secure Iraq.

At the Prime Minister's request, the coalition has dispatched a rapid reaction force to Samarra to assist Iraqi forces in guarding the mosque and restoring calm and security to the area. The United States also stands ready to help the Iraqi people rebuild and restore this holy shrine. I call upon the international community and Iraq's neighbors to do everything in their power to help Iraq's Government and people combat the terrorists, especially in stopping the flow of foreign terrorists into Iraq. Those responsible for this outrage must be found and brought to justice. The United States stands by the Iraqi people in this difficult moment and remains fully committed to helping all Iraqis realize their dreams of a peaceful future.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Statement on the Death of Parliament Member Walid Eido of Lebanon

June 13, 2007

I strongly condemn today's assassination of Lebanese Member of Parliament Walid Eido, who was murdered along with his son, two bodyguards, and a number of others.

There has been a clear pattern of assassinations and attempted assassinations in Lebanon since October 2004. Those working for a sovereign and democratic Lebanon have always been the ones targeted. The victims have always been those who sought an end

to Syrian President Asad's interference in Lebanon's internal affairs.

The United States will continue to stand up for Lebanon, its people, and its legitimate Government as they face these attacks. The special tribunal for Lebanon must be allowed to do its work so that those behind the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and related crimes can be brought to justice. The assault on Lebanese state institutions by terrorists and armed extremists, cross-border arms trafficking, and efforts by the regimes in Damascus and Tehran to foment instability in Lebanon must stop now.

We ask for the international community to support the Lebanese Government as it investigates this latest assault on its democracy. The perpetrators of these political assassinations must be brought to justice, and we all have an obligation to help the Government of Lebanon identify, investigate, and prosecute these killers.

Statement on the "Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy"

June 13, 2007

Shortly after the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech, I directed Secretary Michael Leavitt, Secretary Margaret Spellings, and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to examine the broad and complex issues raised by this tragedy. I asked them to determine how the Federal Government could best help to support State and local efforts to ensure that our communities, including college campuses, are safe. They responded quickly, traveling to a dozen States to hear from Governors, law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, educators, and other State and local officials.

They learned a great deal and today presented me with their key findings. I look forward to reviewing their recommendations in more detail, but a few points are immediately clear: Information sharing among the health care, law enforcement, and education communities must improve; those groups must better understand the Federal laws related to information sharing; and accurate, complete information sharing between States and

the Federal Government is essential in helping to keep guns out of the wrong hands and to punish those who break the law.

I thank Secretaries Leavitt and Spellings and Attorney General Gonzales for their fine work on this important report.

With the findings in this report in mind, I am closely following legislative efforts to strengthen the instant background check system. I look forward to working with Congress on this effort.

Remarks at the President's Dinner

June 13, 2007

Thank you all. It's good to be with you. Thank you for your warm welcome. Appreciate it. Thank you. Please be seated. I remember back in 1997, when Corker hosted a deal for me. I was Governor, and he looked at me, and he said, "I don't think you'll ever be President." Of course, I looked at him and said, "I don't think you'll ever be Senator." [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you, Bob. Thank you for your strong friendship, and thanks for running and winning in the great State of Tennessee.

I'm proud to be with you. We have a goal, and that is to retake the House, retake the Senate, and keep the White House in 2008. And I appreciate you joining us tonight to see that that goal becomes reality.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She is a patient woman. She's also a fabulous First Lady. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who've joined us tonight.

I want to thank my friend Senator Mitch McConnell. The country will be better off with Mitch McConnell as leader of the United States Senate. And I thank John Boehner, the House Republican leader. And the country would be better off if he's the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I thank John Ensign—Senator Ensign from Nevada; Tom Cole from Oklahoma. They're the chairmen of the NRSC and NRCC. Their job is to field the candidates that are going to enable us to achieve our goal. Your job has been to make sure they got enough money to run. And I thank you for coming, and so do they.